

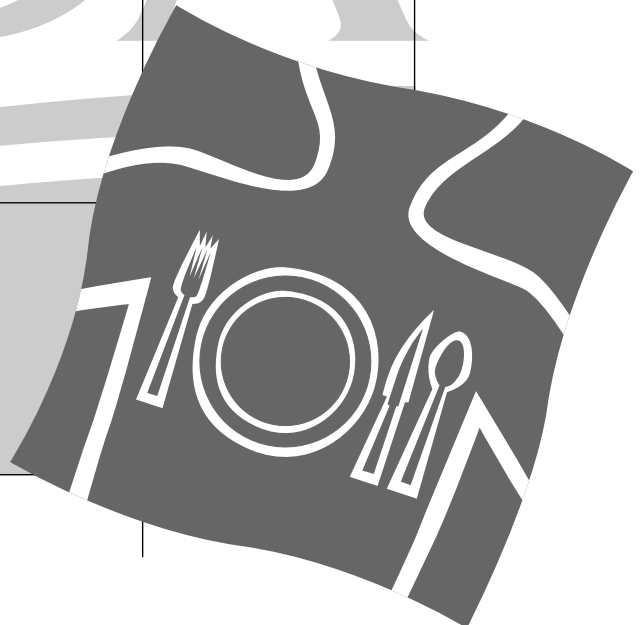
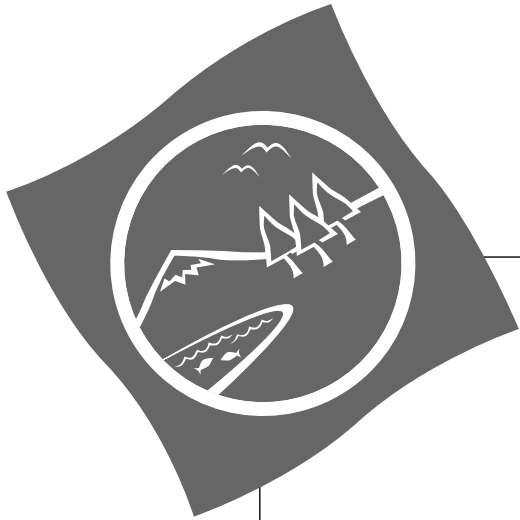


United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Office of the  
Secretary

# Strategic Plan 1997 - 2002

*A Healthy and Productive Nation  
in Harmony With the Land*



USDA



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*A Healthy and Productive Nation  
in Harmony With the Land*

*September 1997*

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September 30, 1997

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Office of the  
Secretary

Washington, DC  
20250

## Message from the Secretary

I am pleased to present to the President, Members of Congress, and the American public, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Strategic Plan for fiscal years 1997-2002. This plan was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, and describes USDA's anticipated accomplishments. It is our intention to meet, and exceed, the high standards expected of us.

Today, though the scope of our responsibilities has expanded significantly, USDA continues President Lincoln's legacy by serving all Americans — the 2 percent of our Nation who farm and the 20 percent who live in rural America, as well as families needing food assistance and nutrition services, visitors to our national forests, the half of all American schoolchildren who eat school lunches provided through the National School Lunch Program, and everyone who needs safe food. Our commitment to meeting those responsibilities is reflected in the following three goals, which direct and guide USDA activities.

- Expand economic and trade opportunities for agricultural producers and other rural residents;
- Ensure food for the hungry, and a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply; and
- Promote sensible management of our natural resources.

These goals are supported by a set of management initiatives designed to provide effective customer service and efficient program delivery.

We support fair treatment of our clients, customers, and employees, and we will act quickly to take appropriate action to provide programs, services, and opportunities in compliance with all applicable civil rights laws and regulations.

We are committed to eliminating hunger with food assistance and gleaning programs, and to keeping our farmers competitive in global markets. It is the Government's role to keep international markets open, and we will continue our efforts to promote the export of American agricultural products, and to fight barriers to international free trade.

As we move into an era driven by demand, we seek to preserve the structure of American agriculture, to promote small and middle-sized farming operations, to encourage farmer cooperatives and other marketing operations that improve

the profitability of farm businesses, and fight against unfair practices in all concentrated domestic markets. We are weaving a new safety net for American farmers that will help protect our farms against losses due to poor harvests or natural disasters which might otherwise threaten the economic stability of American agriculture.

New programs coming from the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (1996 Farm Bill) provide an opportunity for us to strengthen the conservation activities of the Department. We support the emphasis on managing our diverse ecology—our soil, water, and air, as well as our forests and rangelands—and on producing sound scientific information to allow better resource management decisions.

As I pledged to President Clinton, we will work to ensure that people who live in rural America have opportunities for economic growth, for decent housing, safe water, and sanitary waste disposal. New programs like the Fund for Rural America and the Water 2000 initiative will make significant improvements in the quality of life for rural Americans.

I have been personally involved in developing this Plan and the Department's strategic goals, and I urge all USDA employees, partners, and stakeholders to read this Plan and identify their unique role in helping to achieve its goals. I urge all Americans to read this Plan and learn about the programs and services USDA offers, and how they can participate.

Times have changed, but not our goals or the intent President Lincoln had when he established the "People's Department." Farming should be profitable. Hard work should bring rewards. All Americans—urban and rural—should have adequate housing, running water, telephones, and telecommunications access to "the Information Superhighway." Air and water should be clean. Our food supply must be secure and healthy. Our people should not go hungry.

That is what we are about in USDA.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Glickman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "G".

DAN GLICKMAN

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# USDA Strategic Plan 1997 - 2002

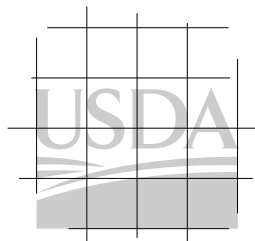
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*...USDA has offices or committees in nearly every county of the Nation and personnel stationed around the world, providing food assistance to low-income households and supporting production agriculture, conservation, land management, international trade and marketing, economic development, and food safety.*

## Background

The U. S. Department of Agriculture has grown substantially from its creation in 1862. USDA's current operating budget of almost \$60 billion is exceeded only by those of the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Treasury, and the Social Security Administration. Mandatory programs, which include the majority of the food assistance programs, farm commodity programs, and a number of conservation programs, account for three-fourths of the USDA budget. With a payroll of more than 100,000 staff years, USDA has offices or committees in nearly every county of the Nation and personnel stationed around the world, providing food assistance to low-income households and supporting production agriculture, conservation, land management, international trade and marketing, economic development, and food safety.

A major function of the Department is research, for the benefit of production agriculture, food safety, nutrition education, conservation, and the environment. Research is supported by a decentralized system of schools, experiment stations, and county service centers. Much of that system is the result of the Morrill Act of 1862, which established the Land-Grant colleges and provided Federal land to each State to support primarily agricultural, mechanical, and technical arts institutions of higher learning. In 1887, the Hatch Act established experiment stations at the Land-Grant colleges, uniting agricultural research with education. In 1890, the second Morrill Act established the Historically Black Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, now called the 1890 Institutions, and in 1914, Congress completed the link through legislation which provided for agricultural extension work to be administered through State agricultural colleges. Agricultural research, education, and the collection and analysis of statistical information continue to be a primary function

of several USDA agencies: the Agricultural Research Service, Economic Research Service, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, and National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Inspection and regulatory responsibilities were established by the Meat Inspection Act of 1890, and expanded shortly thereafter when USDA was authorized to implement controls on the importation of plants and animals to control diseases, insects, and parasites. In 1921, USDA began regulating meatpackers, and inspection of poultry for interstate commerce was added to the Department's responsibilities in 1957. Today, USDA administers a broad range of inspection and regulatory programs, and carries primary responsibility for the safety of commercial supplies of meat, poultry, and egg products. In 1995, USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service began addressing microbial pathogens and making our inspection system more prevention-oriented, issuing the Pathogen Reduction/Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) regulation. HACCP, the blueprint for the future of meat and poultry inspection, will greatly improve food safety by identifying and controlling hazards before products reach consumers.

Management of the National Forests, created "...for the purpose of securing favorable conditions of water flows, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber..." for the use of citizens of the United States, was transferred to USDA in 1905. In the ensuing years, the Forest Service has established a tradition of professional management of the 191 million acres of public land—which encompasses 155 national forests, 20 national grasslands, 5 national recreation areas, and 2 national monuments—and of broadening the original purpose to include ecosystem management, recreation, and conservation.

The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (1996 Farm Bill) strengthened the conservation activities of the Department, placing additional





*USDA agencies carry out these responsibilities by operating more than 200 programs through the following 7 mission areas.*

- *Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services;*
- *Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services;*
- *Food Safety;*
- *Marketing and Regulatory Programs;*
- *Natural Resources and Environment;*
- *Research, Education and Economics; and*
- *Rural Development.*

emphasis on managing our diverse ecology—our soil, water, and air, as well as our forests and range lands—on private lands as well as public. The Natural Resources Conservation Service is the lead Federal conservation agency for private lands, providing conservation guidance through local conservation districts to individuals, communities, and State and local agencies.

Financial assistance to farmers began in 1916 with the Federal Farm Loan Act, which provided credit to farmers at reasonable rates. During the Depression, Congress authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to “stabilize, support, and protect farm income and prices; help maintain balanced and adequate supplies of agricultural commodities; and help in the orderly distribution of commodities.” In the decades since, farm commodity programs have undergone many changes. In 1954, legislation provided for flexible price supports and commodity set-asides to control supply. The 1977 Farm Bill provided price and income protection for farmers, and assured consumers of an abundance of food and fiber at reasonable prices. Subsequent farm bills in 1985 and 1990 continued these policies with few changes.

After the longest farm bill debate in history, the 1996 Farm Bill made significant changes by suspending the existing authority for many programs and loans, replacing with fixed annual payments over a 7-year period, removing the link between Government support payments and farm prices. Other provisions support rural development by adding to programs providing loans for rural electrification and helping farm families buy land and operate their farms. These programs in recent years expanded to provide telephone systems, water and wastewater systems, and more recently, modern telecommunications infrastructure and services, and long-distance learning. The 1996 Farm Bill reinforced these responsibilities by creating the Rural Community Advancement Program, a key feature of which is USDA leadership in forming partnerships and encouraging planning

for community development.

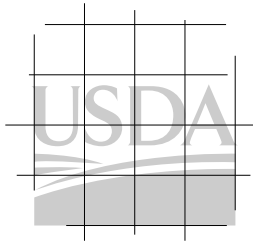
Although food programs now comprise about 60 percent of the USDA budget, they are a relatively recent addition to the Department’s responsibilities. In 1946, the School Lunch Program was established to assure one hot meal daily to schoolchildren. In 1964, the Food Stamp Program was added to provide food aid to impoverished families, and since that time the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (the WIC program) and other food assistance programs have been added to support a national goal of eliminating hunger in our country. USDA plays a large role in enhancing world food security, as well, primarily through the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, generally known as Public Law 480, which authorizes the Secretary to provide various types of assistance including food relief donations to foreign countries.

USDA agencies carry out these responsibilities by operating more than 200 programs through the following 7 mission areas.

- Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services;
- Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services;
- Food Safety;
- Marketing and Regulatory Programs;
- Natural Resources and Environment;
- Research, Education and Economics; and
- Rural Development.

Each mission area is a distinctive organization with one or more operating agencies, each focusing on its component role in the USDA mosaic and working with the other mission areas to fulfill the Department’s responsibilities to production agriculture; a safe, affordable,

nutritious and accessible food supply; sound management of forests and rangelands; and rural community development.



*Together, the Overview and the agency plans fulfill all requirements of GPRA, as defined by guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).*

## The USDA Strategic Plan

The USDA Strategic Plan defines our goals and demonstrates how USDA agencies work together to achieve our common purposes, each with a role vital to the success of the whole. We view our Strategic Plan as a commitment to the American people to be accountable in our actions and expenditures, and to demonstrate our value through accomplishment.

The timeframe of this Plan is fiscal years 1997-2002, and represents our projection of program responsibilities and benefits over that 5-year span. However, we recognize that the rate of change in farm policy and other responsibilities may be considerably faster, and that we must be ready to respond to natural disasters, emergencies, and other events we cannot now foresee. In addition, the provisions of the 1996 Farm Bill expire in 2002, and we are aware that legislation will surely change our role at that time, if not before. We have structured this document to preserve our ability to respond quickly to changing demands through integration with our Annual Performance Plans, allowing us the flexibility to change our programs and initiatives as demand requires, and to reflect those changes in modifications to our Strategic Plan.

While the role of USDA continues to evolve, our commitment is to wise management of our resources, and to balancing the needs of production agriculture, environmental stewardship, economic development, and community vitality. As a result of the Department's reorganization and a streamlining plan developed in conjunction with the reorganization, significant reductions in both staffing and funding levels have been put in place. We are reviewing our processes and procedures, identifying what we want to accomplish, setting goals, and evaluating our progress

toward achieving those goals.

This Overview and the agency plans which follow comprise the USDA Strategic Plan, and provide a roadmap for how we plan to accomplish our Strategic Goals. The strategic plans of USDA mission areas and agencies are prepared in conformity with the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. Each plan includes:

- the mission statement of the organization;
- the goals and objectives of the organization;
- the strategies and resources for achieving the goals and objectives;
- the relationship of the long-term goals and objectives and the Annual Performance Plan;
- identification of those key factors external to the agency and beyond its control that could significantly affect the achievement of the general goals and objectives; and
- a description of how program evaluations were used to establish goals and future program evaluations.

Together, the Overview and the agency plans fulfill all requirements of GPRA, as defined by guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Performance measures and indicators in the agency plans provide a basis for measuring our success. Achievement of these goals and objectives depends upon resources—human, capital, information and other resources, as well as operational processes, skills and technology—and resources depend upon the budget process. The goals in this Plan represent the Department's priorities, and will be reflected in USDA budget proposals.

Our commitment is to "a Government that works better and costs less," and that commitment is reflected in the USDA Mission Statement, an overarching, integrating statement of purpose—an

“umbrella” under which the multiple missions of USDA agencies are united.

## Mission Statement

The mission of the U. S. Department of Agriculture is to enhance the quality of life for the American people by supporting production agriculture; ensuring a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply; caring for agricultural, forest, and range lands; supporting sound development of rural communities; providing economic opportunities for farm and rural residents; expanding global markets for agricultural and forest products and services; and working to reduce hunger in America and throughout the world.



## USDA Strategic Goals

The mission of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is carried out by agencies working cooperatively, each with its own role, to achieve the Department’s mission. Embodied in the USDA Mission Statement are the three themes the Secretary has identified as strategic goals for USDA policies and programs:

- Expand economic and trade opportunities for agricultural producers and other rural residents;
- Ensure food for the hungry, and a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply, and
- Promote sensible management of our natural resources.

These goals are supported by a set of management initiatives designed to provide effective customer service and efficient program delivery.

USDA agencies work together and with other Federal, State, and local government and private sector partners to satisfy these strategic goals. Agencies coor-

dinate operations with these partners, and are coordinating with them in the development of strategic and operating plans, as well. A discussion of critical partnerships between agencies and with other entities follows each numbered objective.

A glossary of agency names and acronyms, a profile of USDA agencies, a brief description of USDA’s future operating environment, and the relationship between departmentwide strategic goals and individual agency goals are contained in appendices to this document.

## Goal 1

### Expand Economic and Trade Opportunities for Agricultural Producers and Other Rural Residents

Major aspects of the USDA mission are combined under the first USDA goal: enhancing the safety net for farmers; expanding global markets for agricultural and forest products and services; promoting a fair and competitive domestic marketplace; and providing economic opportunities to support sound development of rural communities.

#### ■ 1.1 Enhance the economic safety net for farmers and ranchers

Farmers and ranchers face an increasingly risky economic environment as a result of changes to commodity programs which removed linkages between support payments and prices or production levels, and as a result of economic trends including agricultural industrialization and the concentration and globalization of markets. Technological change, environmental and conservation concerns, and the spread of pests and diseases are also significant factors, along with the unpredictable forces of nature.

The 1996 Farm Bill significantly altered

the Department's role from directly influencing farm production and prices for major commodities to supporting the farm community, particularly small and medium-sized farm operations, with a safety net of broad-based risk management tools to identify, measure, and manage risk, to help farming and ranching operations of all sizes thrive in this increasingly competitive environment.

Crop insurance available to producers through commercial companies offers Federal Crop Insurance Corporation-designed, Government-backed insurance protection to cover production losses due to unavoidable causes, enabling farmers and ranchers to deal with fluctuations of the marketplace as well as with natural disasters. New revenue insurance programs insure farmers and ranchers against losses stemming from low prices or poor harvests, and help farmers mitigate risk through education, credit assistance, commodity loans and payments, conservation assistance, and emergency and disaster assistance. Technical assistance available to producers of all sizes encourages development of producer cooperatives and other marketing opportunities for small and medium-sized farms and ranches, to help them compete with larger producers.

### ***Strategies to Achieve This Objective***

The Risk Management Agency (RMA) is creating numerous risk management tools and ensuring their availability to producers, allowing them to customize their risk management plans. The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) provides disaster and emergency assistance, and commodity loans that provide producers with the option of holding their crops after harvest to take advantage of higher prices. The Farm Service Agency makes available supervised credit and technical assistance to borrowers. FSA utilizes an aggressive market placement program to help direct loan applicants to commercial lenders offering guaranteed farm operating loans. ARS conducts research in increasing food production, improving the

efficiency of agricultural production systems and enhancing the genetic potential of plants and animals, to decrease the risks caused by disease, pests, and extreme weather conditions. Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) promotes higher education in the agricultural sciences to ensure the long-term productivity of American agriculture. The Office of the Chief Economist (OCE) provides market intelligence, using statistical information gathered by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), and economic analysis provided by the Economic Research Service (ERS). The Alternative Agricultural Research and Commercialization Corporation (AARC) provides funding for research and commercialization of new products using agricultural and forestry materials and animal by-products.

### ***Major Initiatives***

- Support legislation to expand our authority to offer revenue insurance and make other program improvements to insure all agricultural production from disaster and price declines by the year 2000.
- Improve the response capability of the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program and other emergency programs.
- Establish and maintain farm income support through production flexibility contract payments.
- Maintain effective marketing assistance and price and income protection through commodity loan programs.
- Develop risk analysis and risk education initiatives to help farmers and ranchers develop production, marketing and risk management skills.
- Provide timely weather forecast data to agricultural producers, so they can make appropriate decisions regarding crops.
- Maintain farm loan program emphasis



on repayment ability and targeted assistance.

- Promote skills development to hasten the transition of farm credit borrowers from Government loans to commercial lenders.
- Implement Electronic Warehouse Receipts and other documents of title for all agricultural commodities.

### ***Other Entities Involved***

USDA works with producer and trade groups to deliver commodity program loans and payments, with commercial banks to deliver credit assistance, and with the private insurance industry to deliver crop and revenue insurance to producers. Other Government agencies such as the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which oversees commodity futures markets, work with USDA to develop new risk management options for producers. Agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency work with USDA to address the consequences of natural disasters for farmers and rural communities.

## **■ 1.2 Open, expand, and maintain global market opportunities for agricultural producers**

Changes in Federal farm policy make it clear that growth in income for farming and ranching operations of all sizes is increasingly dependent on market expansion and export growth. The USDA role is to protect and expand the position of American agricultural and forestry products in foreign markets, and to ensure “a level playing field” in domestic markets, to preserve a structure of American agriculture which promotes prosperity for agricultural producers of all sizes.

Increases in world income and economic growth are helping to spur foreign demand for American agricultural products, and recent trade agreements are providing unprecedented access to foreign

markets by helping to lower tariffs, removing non-tariff barriers, and reducing export subsidies. Since 1991, American agricultural exports have increased by more than 50 percent. In 1996, exports accounted for 24 percent of farm income; by the year 2000, 30 percent of each dollar of farm income is expected to come from the export market. To maintain this momentum, we must expand international market opportunities, and assist American agricultural producers to respond to global consumer expectations.

Exports of American farm and food products set another record in 1996, at just under \$60 billion, and supported 1 million jobs both on and off the farm, one-third of which are in rural areas. To protect these jobs, USDA will continue efforts to enhance the international competitiveness of agricultural exports, implementing vigorous export promotion strategies.

Competitor countries are expected to continue to use export subsidies and export credit and non-price sales promotions, and as a result, international competition for agricultural markets is expected to remain keen. Negotiating reform of international trade practices and ensuring full compliance with agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement and Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture will be most important. For example, a key outcome of the Uruguay Round is that sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) trade measures are to be based on sound scientific principles. We will work closely with international agricultural markets over the next 5 years to ensure that SPS trade barriers are reduced.

Just as we must protect our ability to produce and market agricultural products in expanding international markets, we must promote efficiency and combat unfair practices in domestic markets. As recommended by the USDA Advisory Committee on Agricultural Concentration, we will continue to aggressively monitor the performance and structure of the livestock, meat, and poultry industries, and investigate anti-com-

*As agriculture enters the Information Age, USDA also has an important role to play as an information broker.*

petitive practices to ensure that farms within concentrated industries are not using market size or dominance to adversely affect competition.

As agriculture enters the Information Age, USDA also has an important role to play as an information broker. USDA collects, produces, and disseminates a vast amount of information about agriculture and rural areas—from basic data to comprehensive analysis to long-term weather, crop, and market forecasts—which can assist producers of all sizes, and we must improve market information to producers. We must provide good weather and climate information and cost-effective user fee commodity grading and other marketing services, and we must assist American agricultural producers to respond to threats to production or delivery capabilities.

#### **Strategies to Achieve This Objective**

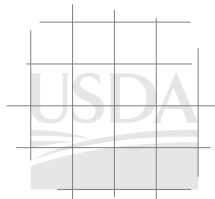
The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) takes the lead in opening and expanding global market opportunities for American food and agricultural enterprises through trade agreements, market promotion activities, commodity analysis, and export credit programs. FSA administers farm commodity and credit programs. NASS provides price and production data that assist in the administration of agricultural price, income support, and production adjustment programs. The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) assures safety in meat, poultry, and egg supplies. The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) regulates the marketing of livestock, poultry, and meat, and inspects grains and oilseeds. AARC supports research and new production technologies to find new uses for agricultural products and bring jobs and development to rural America. The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) develops new science and technologies to eliminate SPS barriers to free trade.

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is a key agency tasked with setting standards for the marketing of agricultural products and ensuring fair trading prac-

tices. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) responds to issues involving animal and plant health and animal well-being. OCE provides economic analysis of markets, using statistical information gathered by NASS and analyzed by ERS. CSREES provides research, education and outreach activities promoting producer access to domestic and foreign agricultural markets. The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) helps bring modern telecommunications infrastructures to rural areas, allowing agricultural producers access to the latest market information.

#### **Major Initiatives**

- In coordination with the interagency Trade Policy Steering Committee, pursue trade liberalization through bilateral agreements, regional free trade agreements, and the next round of multilateral trade negotiations; monitor and secure compliance with multilateral and bilateral trade agreements.
- Increase American exporter access to the most promising agricultural, fish, and forest product markets.
- Increase demand for American agricultural exports by 5 percent over current export targets by the year 2000, through effective use of market development and export promotion programs.
- Assist American agriculture to respond to global consumer expectations, worldwide health and environmental sustainability concerns, and technical barriers to trade; aggressively counter unfair trade practices of competitor nations and encourage the use of sound science to justify sanitary and phytosanitary trade barriers.
- Increase usage of export credit guarantees in high-growth emerging markets for all products, with special emphasis on expanding credit availability for private sector programs and high-value products.
- Shift the multiple objectives of Food



*Many USDA market development activities are carried out cooperatively with non-Federal entities, including State departments of agriculture, State regional trade associations, agricultural cooperatives, farm organizations, and private sector trade promotion associations.*

for Progress and Emerging Markets programs toward increased focus on long-term market development by targeting assistance to those developing countries with the best prospects of becoming future commercial markets.

- Expand the scope and improve the accuracy and timeliness of global market information; provide objective statistical information, market intelligence and analysis, and long-term agricultural forecasting.
- Preserve and strengthen family farm agriculture through effective outreach efforts, and increase the number of underserved, small, and limited-resource family farms participating in USDA programs.
- Conduct research and disseminate information on sustainable farming practices that are suitable for smaller farms, and provide farm loans to assist eligible individuals to become successful farmers and ranchers.
- Enhance producer access to fair and competitive markets by developing and implementing appropriate marketing standards, cost-effective user fee commodity grading, plant and animal health measures, and other marketing services.
- Implement the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Concentration to provide more and better information to enable markets to work better.
- Establish a dealer trust for the livestock industry similar to the packer trust, to protect farmers from financial losses in marketing.
- Reform Dairy Marketing Orders to consolidate and streamline operations that improve equity and efficiency for the industry.
- Provide producers with the science-based information and technology necessary to achieve the productivity and sustainability that characterizes a

strong and viable production system .

- Employ the Internet and other electronic communication opportunities to speed dissemination of market and weather news and information.
- Produce and disseminate the economic, statistical, technical and science-based information regarding potential overseas markets and export opportunities necessary to generate new and improved products and processes for global customers.

#### **Other Entities Involved**

Trade agreements and enforcement of the agreements are coordinated through an interagency process. USDA works closely with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative on trade policy, and with the Departments of State, Commerce, Treasury, and the Office of Management and Budget, and coordinates on SPS food trade issues with the Food and Drug Administration. USDA is a member of the interagency Trade Policy Coordinating Committee, which reviews and coordinates export promotion programs, and works with the Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation on trade promotion issues. USDA is actively involved with many international organizations which have important roles in international agriculture and trade, including the World Trade Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the International Grains Council, and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture.

Many USDA market development activities are carried out cooperatively with non-Federal entities, including State departments of agriculture, State regional trade associations, agricultural cooperatives, farm organizations, and private sector trade promotion associations.

#### **■ 1.3 Provide access to capital**

**and credit to enhance the ability of rural communities to develop, grow, and invest in projects to expand economic opportunities and improve the quality of life for farm and rural residents**

A major concern of USDA is ensuring that the 20 percent of Americans residing in rural areas have the same opportunity for economic growth as other Americans. Rural America has fewer job opportunities and lower income than the rest of the Nation. Rural America faces greater difficulty in providing basic community facilities and services—3 million rural households lack adequate, safe water and 1.3 million rural Americans live in substandard housing.

To ensure that local needs are met, USDA is partnering with State and local governments, educational institutions, and private sector and non-profit organizations to tailor programs to meet the special needs of rural communities. We are working to assure that local delivery of USDA programs is fair and equitable, and we are developing outreach services to encourage the participation of socially disadvantaged communities and businesses.

The future prosperity of rural America will rest on economic diversity, particularly in value-added industries, and USDA is committed to maintaining and improving the quality of life in rural America through more effective use of Federal dollars invested in housing, telecommunications, community facilities, rural utilities and rural businesses, assuring equal access to the benefits that can be realized through these investments.

***Strategies to Achieve This Objective***

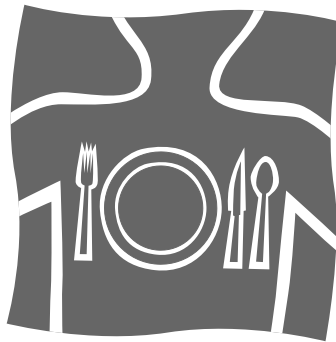
USDA's Rural Development (RD) agencies—Rural Housing Service (RHS), Rural Utilities Service (RUS), and Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS)—have the lead role in the economic development of rural communities, providing affordable credit and technical assistance to families and rural communities to build,

purchase or rehabilitate housing for low-income families; providing community facilities for fire protection, health care clinics, and libraries; working with private sector lenders to meet business credit needs in rural areas; and providing loans and grants to rural cooperatives to develop telecommunications, electric, water, and wastewater services. FSA provides supervised credit and technical assistance to borrowers to aid them in obtaining secure loans from commercial lenders. ERS provides economic analysis of investment, employment training and demographics, and how they affect rural economies. CSREES supports research and higher education in the food and agricultural sciences, and extension services to rural residents. The Food and Consumer Service (FCS) provides nutrition and food assistance programs to children and low-income adults in rural areas. Forest Service (FS) operates economic recovery programs in communities dependent on natural resources, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical assistance to plan, develop, and implement resource conservation programs. AARC supports research and new production technologies to find new uses for agricultural products and bring jobs and development to rural America.

***Major Initiatives***

- Implement the President's Water 2000 initiative for low-income residents who do not have drinking water in their homes, or who have substandard water quality or unsanitary waste disposal.
- Support the President's National Homeownership Initiative by maintaining the direct single family housing program for low-income families, and encouraging continued growth in the guaranteed loan program for rural residents.
- Provide decent, affordable housing, clean water and sanitary waste disposal, and safe working conditions for all farm workers by the year 2000.





- Ensure the existing stock of rural rental housing projects is preserved for low-income families and that new rental housing projects remain affordable.
- Create 100,000 new jobs in rural America by the year 2000 by encouraging and enhancing agricultural diversity, promoting marketing networks and cooperative partnerships, and developing new products and processes, particularly value-added processes which hold promise for creating good-paying jobs in rural areas.
- Develop the telecommunications infrastructure and reasonable-cost access to the Internet in rural areas to assure that every school, hospital, and business has Internet access by the year 2000, providing access to marketing, crop and weather information, and distance learning.
- Develop and analyze demographic, natural resource, infrastructure, and program data on rural communities to improve upon the success of existing rural Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities, and Champion Communities initiatives to enhance local economic climates in rural areas.
- Implement the Fund for Rural America, giving emphasis to projects that integrate research, education, and activities designed to expand economic opportunities, remove barriers and help rural areas and communities plan for the future.

#### ***Other Entities Involved***

USDA partners with a variety of entities, such as commercial banks and community development corporations and organizations providing technical support (such as the National Rural Water Association). State agencies administer other sources of financing, such as tax credits that are used in conjunction with USDA assistance.

## **Goal 2**

### **Ensure Food for the Hungry, and a Safe, Affordable, Nutritious, and Accessible Food Supply**

USDA supports production agriculture to ensure adequate supplies of affordable and nutritious food, and safeguards and ensures standards of quality in the food supply through inspecting and grading services. We operate food and nutrition assistance programs to assure children and low-income families access to a healthy diet. We support gleaning and other food recovery efforts that make available nutritious, wholesome food to needy members of our population. We develop dietary guidelines to promote good nutrition, and encourage the development of farmer cooperatives and farmer's markets, which support the structure of American agriculture by promoting marketing opportunities for small and medium-sized farming and ranching operations, and offering farm-fresh foods to consumers.

#### **■ 2.1 Reduce hunger by assuring low-income households access to adequate supplies of nutritious food**

Almost 60 percent of USDA-appropriated funds support food assistance programs operated by FCS: the Food Stamp Program; the Child Nutrition Programs, including the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program; the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); and other food assistance programs for vulnerable populations. USDA is committed to fighting hunger, alleviating food insecurity, and improving the nutritional knowledge of Americans through a variety of programs. These national programs work individually and in concert to provide a nutrition safety net for children and low-income adults.

*Our programs are offered without discrimination to all who are eligible. We develop appropriate special programs for groups with special needs, and develop community organizational and media outlets to be sure all eligible participants know about our programs.*

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- **Low-income households and workable, childless, low-income adults.** The Food Stamp Program (FSP) is the largest food assistance program operated by USDA, and the primary source of nutrition assistance for low-income Americans. The FSP is an entitlement program with standardized eligibility and benefits, administered by the States through a Federal-State partnership. The Federal Government pays the full cost of benefits and about one-half of the States' administrative costs for program delivery to low-income households and workable, childless, low-income adults. Adults able to work are expected to utilize training and employment opportunities so that they may become independent from support programs.
- **Women, infants and children.** Research demonstrates a clear relationship between food, good nutrition, and the capacity of children to develop and learn. Emphasis on the health of prospective mothers is vitally important—studies have shown that inadequate consumption of nutrients and vitamins by pregnant women leads to poor birth outcomes. Because the earliest years of growth and development are the most critical, several programs focus on women, infants, and children. WIC is the principal program serving this target group, providing supplemental food packages, nutrition education, and referrals to health and social services agencies for low-income pregnant, breast-feeding and postpartum women, infants, and children up to 5 years of age. This group is also served

by food stamps, child care food programs, and school lunch and breakfast programs.

- **Native Americans, low-income elderly, and disabled.** Multiple food assistance and feeding programs serve the elderly and disabled and those living on Indian reservations. An alternative to the Food Stamp Program, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations serves this population. Commodity assistance and food donation programs provide food packages and commodities for soup kitchens, food banks, and emergency feeding organizations. The Nutrition Program for the Elderly provides cash and commodities to States for distribution to local organizations that prepare and serve meals to the elderly, in congregate settings or in their homes.
- **The American public.** Nutrition education programs define a healthy diet for the general public through such efforts as development of the Food Guide Pyramid. Other promotional activities linking a healthy diet to the prevention of diet-related disease are provided to the general population, and targeted through food assistance programs to low-income groups.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (the Welfare Reform Act) dramatically changed the shape of social welfare and nutrition assistance programs. Welfare reform promotes self-sufficiency and personal responsibility, enhances State flexibility, and strengthens program integrity. Among nutrition assistance programs, the changes are greatest in the Food Stamp Program, where it will achieve substantial savings through a combination of across-the-board cuts, targeted benefit reductions, and eligibility restrictions. Reform will affect program administration and expand Electronic Benefit Transfer. USDA and the Food Stamp Program will

face numerous challenges in implementing the important changes in the new law, but we are committed to feeding 500,000 more people—about the same number of people who will lose benefits under welfare reform—through our network of food assistance efforts.

#### ***Strategies to Achieve This Objective***

FSA and AMS work with FCS to provide commodity foods to schools for lunch and breakfast programs, summer feeding programs, and non-profit community feeding programs that focus on vulnerable groups: pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants, and children; low-income adults and persons with temporary disabilities who need help through difficult times; and elderly or disabled low-income Americans. To meet nutrition education objectives, FCS cooperates with ARS, CSREES, AMS, FSIS, and Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP).

#### ***Major Initiatives***

- Monitor the impact of welfare reform initiatives on hunger to assure that people who lose Food Stamp Program and other food assistance benefits do not go hungry.
- Implement a comprehensive food assistance and nutrition information strategy that assures children and needy families access to nutrition information and a healthful diet.
- Fully fund the WIC Program to improve the nutritional status, birth outcomes, and health outcomes of low-income women, infants, and preschool children.
- Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of commodity acquisition, procurement, storage, and distribution, to support food assistance programs and administer the U.S. Warehouse Act.
- Provide job training, child care, and other support—especially in rural areas—to aid in the success of the Welfare to Work initiative.
- Expand feeding programs for children from low-income families through summer feeding and after-school activities.
- Modernize benefit delivery systems and improve the integrity and efficiency of food assistance programs through implementation of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) systems.
- Develop a safety net to protect migrant and other transient workers from hunger and malnutrition.
- Expand access to an affordable, nutritious food supply via support for farmer's markets.

#### ***Other Entities Involved***

USDA works with a large cadre of State, Territorial, local, and Indian tribal governments to determine eligibility and effect delivery of food stamps and other food assistance, and nutrition information and education. FCS programs are closely tied to other Federal programs that provide income assistance and nutrition services to low-income populations, offered through agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration on Aging, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

### **■ 2.2 Reduce the incidence of foodborne illness and ensure that commercial food supplies are safe and wholesome**

USDA places a high priority on improving the safety of America's food supply through improved inspection systems, correct labeling of food supplies, research, and education. Medical costs and productivity losses for seven specific pathogens in food have been estimated to range between \$6.5 billion and \$34.9 billion annually. Total costs for all foodborne illnesses are likely to be much higher. Foodborne diseases are particular-

ly serious for vulnerable populations, such as infants, the chronically ill, or the elderly, and they result in some 9,000 deaths a year. Recently USDA elevated food safety responsibilities to a new Subcabinet office.

USDA is committed to building a meat, poultry, and egg products inspection program that effectively utilizes the latest in science and technology. In response to outbreaks of foodborne illness in early 1993, USDA began requiring instructional cooking and handling labels on raw meat and poultry products, and initiated a nationwide *E. coli* bacteria sampling program in processing plants and retail stores that sell raw ground beef. We have moved from a 100-year-old sensory-based inspection system to a science-based system founded on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) program of bacterium testing. USDA conducts both pre- and post-harvest research to reduce potential risks to consumers from toxicants and chemical residues that might contaminate the food supply, and supports the collection of data on the incidence of foodborne illness, in cooperation with the CDC.

Land-grant universities, with financial support from USDA, are researching food safety technology and intervention strategies to develop rapid, sensitive methods of pathogen detection. In addition, USDA supports risk assessment studies that will lead to improved methods for detection and/or control of disease-causing microorganisms.

### ***Strategies to Achieve This Objective***

FSIS administers these new food safety program responsibilities, as part of its responsibility for ensuring that commercial supplies of meat, poultry, and egg products are safe and properly labeled and packaged. GIPSA administers grading programs for livestock, and inspects grains and oilseeds. APHIS provides on-farm disease prevention, surveillance, and management services. ARS researches new food borne illness testing technologies to

reduce the time needed for testing and improve the accuracy of results, and develops new technologies for preventing the introduction of pathogens such as *E. coli* and *Salmonella* into the food supply.

CSREES works with the States to develop research, education, and extension programs to inform and educate food producers, processors, and consumers about food safety and their responsibilities.

### ***Major Initiatives***

- Reduce foodborne illnesses associated with meat, poultry, and egg products by 25 percent by the year 2000, with zero tolerance in USDA food safety programs.
- Improve consumer confidence in food safety by implementing the new science-based system of preventive process control for all meat and poultry products and by reducing pathogens on raw products.
- Organize and implement a farm-to-table strategy for the safety of meat and poultry products; implement the recommendations in the May 1997 report to the President from the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services and the Environmental Protection Agency on ways to improve food safety.
- Develop and improve technology to more easily detect and reduce pathogens in meat, poultry, and egg products.
- Educate food producers, processors, and consumers about their responsibilities for food safety.
- Develop new food safety technologies that help resolve trade-interrupting phytosanitary and sanitary issues with other countries.
- Protect the health of consumers through establishment of international food standards, codes of practice, and other guidelines.



- Strengthen data collection and develop systems to monitor the health and economic impacts of foodborne illnesses on society and the food system.

#### ***Other Entities Involved***

Three USDA agencies—FSIS, ARS and CSREES—work with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the CDC, and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on food safety issues. These agencies work with many constituencies to identify public health risks, coordinate research, and use their collective resources in partnerships with private organizations to monitor foodborne illnesses and design strategies which reduce food safety risks.

### **■ 2.3 Promote gleaning and other food recovery programs**

The Department plays a leading role in food recovery and gleaning activities. To the extent practicable and permitted by law, the Department seeks to increase the quantity of excess wholesome food recovered and delivered to needy Americans by enhancing current food recovery activities supported by USDA programs, creating new food recovery activities, and establishing communication links that will help broaden the understanding and convey the importance of food recovery.

#### ***Strategies to Achieve This Objective***

Food recovery and gleaning are prominent in our contracts with food providers, who donate leftover food from USDA cafeterias to gleaning and food recovery operations. We encourage food recovery and gleaning with food producers, who allow fallen, unharvested, or small fruits and vegetables to be recovered by gleaning and food recovery operations. These are largely volunteer operations, one of the many volunteerism activities the Department supports.

#### ***Major Initiatives***

- Expand food rescue and gleaning efforts by supporting non-profit, volunteer groups and encouraging citizens and private organizations to engage in food recovery and distribution.
- Support gleaning initiatives for foods used in USDA feeding programs and/or distributed by USDA programs.
- Research issues related to food waste and food recovery to better target our efforts.

#### ***Other Entities Involved***

USDA agencies, primarily AMS and FCS, work with food rescue and gleaning organizations to provide surplus food to hungry people.

### **■ 2.4 Improve dietary practices and promote a healthy, well-nourished population through nutrition education and research**

Access to an affordable food supply is only one part of the health equation—consumers must also be educated about selecting a more nutritious diet. Diet-related diseases have high societal costs in terms of health care, human suffering, and lost productivity. USDA conducts research on the links between food consumption and health, providing information to enable individuals to make healthful food choices.

#### ***Strategies to Achieve This Objective***

FCS and CNPP conduct nutrition research and work with HHS to provide nutrition education, incorporating the results of this research into the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. ARS and CSREES conduct fundamental and applied research in human nutrition, food consumption, and food composition.

**Major Initiatives**

- Produce and disseminate up-to-date science-based guidance for a healthful diet, including revision and production of the USDA-HHS Food Guide Pyramid that serves the general population as the basis for making healthful food choices.
- Conduct critical research on food consumption patterns and the impacts of good nutrition on health and children's capacity to learn, and the role of diet and nutrition in maintaining health and lowering the risk of disease in various population groups.
- Increase research on the impact of nutrition on children's ability to learn, and assist the nutritional expertise of school food service personnel to improve the nutritional quality of school meals through the Healthy School Meals and Incentive for Healthy Children initiatives.
- Increase nutrition education marketing and the number of resource materials available through nutrition education partnerships, developing and distributing nutrition education materials to teachers, children, families, and the community.
- Expand nutrition education for women, infants and young children, and other especially high-risk populations.
- Improve the nutritional quality of the food supply through development and production of more nutritious food products.
- Increase data on the diets of small children in order to more accurately assess the impacts of food safety risks, such as pesticide exposure.

**Other Entities Involved**

USDA and EPA share responsibility with FDA and CDC for collecting and disseminating data on the role of nutrition and the health status of Americans, tracking the occurrences and outbreaks of disease

and determining health tolerance levels of pollutants. USDA plays a primary role in nutrition education, working with HHS to develop dietary guidelines and the Food Guide Pyramid.

## ■ 2.5 Enhance world food security and assist in the reduction of world hunger

American food exports have played a major role in improving world food security and reducing the numbers of chronically undernourished and malnourished people in developing foreign countries over the past four decades. Nevertheless, a large share of the world's population continues to experience hunger on a daily basis.

The continuing problem of global food insecurity was addressed at the World Food Summit in Rome, Italy, in November 1996, where a goal was set to reduce by half the number of the world's undernourished population by the year 2015. USDA contributes to this goal by helping developing countries meet their food import needs and improve long-term food security through foreign food aid, technical assistance, research, and economic development activities. Liberalized world trade and efforts to ensure that the benefits of trade liberalization are equitably realized also contribute to economic development and enhanced food security. Efforts to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of these activities will be among the proposals forming a U.S. Action Plan on World Food Security, which is being prepared as a follow-up to the Rome Summit.

**Strategies to Achieve This Objective**

FAS administers a number of foreign food assistance activities, as well as technical assistance and economic development activities. FSA also assists in implementing the food aid programs. A number of other agencies are involved in research and technical assistance, including ARS, CSREES, ERS, NRCS, and FS.

### Major Initiatives

- Assist developing and impoverished countries to meet their food import needs and improve food security through continued American food aid, technical assistance, research, and economic development activities.
- Prepare and implement a U.S. Action Plan on World Food Security.

### Other Entities Involved

USDA works closely with the Agency for International Development (AID) in the administration of foreign food aid programs, and chairs the interagency Food Assistance Policy Council, which establishes policy guidance for foreign food assistance. Other members of the Policy Council include AID, the Department of State, and the Office of Management and Budget. USDA also co-chairs the interagency committee coordinating American participation in and follow-up to the Rome Summit.

USDA maintains close working relationships with other international organizations dealing with international food security, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Grains Council, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture, and many private voluntary organizations and cooperatives, such as CARE and the Catholic Relief Services.

## Goal 3

### Promote Sensible Management of Our Natural Resources

Passage of the 1996 Farm Bill marked the transformation of USDA from an agency that influences land use decisions through commodity programs to one that influences these decisions through conservation programs. Supported by provisions in the 1996 Farm Bill, conservation, envi-

ronmental, and recreation-related programs will receive significant attention during the next 5 years. USDA is committed to maintaining and improving the quality of our air, water, and environment, and protecting fragile forestland and wilderness ecosystems. In partnerships with farmers, ranchers, and private and public landowners across the country, more than half of the Department's employees assist landowners, land users, and land managers to care for the land.

### ■ 3.1 Promote sustainable production of food and fiber products while maintaining a quality environment and strong natural resource base

America's prospects for the future are bound to the health of the land. Over the past decade, American farmers and ranchers have made significant progress in reducing soil erosion, slowing the loss of wetlands, and otherwise conserving natural resources. The partnership between America's private landowners, conservation districts, and State and local conservation agencies has stabilized the American landscape, and helped increase agricultural productivity, while improving our environment.

The sustainable production of food and fiber begins with conserving the quality and productivity of the soil. Soils are a basic natural resource, and their conservation is fundamental to achieving a healthy and productive land. Well-managed cropland also helps provide clean water and air, effective wildlife habitat, and an overall healthy environment. By adopting an ecosystem management approach to conservation, USDA will work to protect the environment on private lands through collaboration and shared responsibility.

Provisions in the 1996 Farm Bill created, consolidated, expanded, and extended conservation initiatives. Programs through FY 2002 will protect farmlands,



*The Department's responsibility for managing natural resources is accomplished primarily through NRCS, FS, and FSA.*

preserve wetlands, improve wildlife habitat, purchase floodplain easements to provide emergency watershed protection, reduce flood risk, and conserve private grazing lands. But effective stewardship depends on having the right science-based information and technological tools, and transferring this information to landowners, land users, and land managers. Acquiring the tools and information requires a substantial investment in natural resource data, to assess status, conditions and trends which contribute to the development of sound natural resource management strategies.

#### **Strategies to Achieve This Objective**

The Department's responsibility for managing natural resources is accomplished primarily through NRCS, FS, and FSA. NRCS is the lead Federal conservation agency for private lands, providing conservation guidance through local conservation districts to individuals, communities, and State and local agencies. FS is the largest land manager in the Federal Government, with responsibility for about 192 million acres of public land in 44 States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. FSA administers the Conservation Reserve Program with the assistance of NRCS, under which CCC safeguards about 36 million acres of environmentally sensitive land to prevent soil erosion, increase wildlife habitat, and protect ground and surface water. FSA also administers the Emergency Conservation Program, which provides emergency funds to farmers and ranchers to assist in rehabilitating farmlands damaged by natural disaster.

Many other USDA agencies collaborate to develop and transfer natural resource management technology and tools to individual landowners and communities, to sustain land productivity, and to conserve and enhance natural resources. ARS conducts basic and applied research on soil and water management and soil erosion, and develops new agricultural technologies and new farming practices

that reduce the adverse impacts of production agriculture on the environment. CSREES works with local governmental partners to advance research, extension, and education in agriculture, natural resources, and the environment. NASS provides data and ERS provides economic and other analyses on natural resource issues, including how agricultural production practices and chemical use affect environmental quality. FAS works with foreign governments and institutions to transfer sustainable agriculture and natural resource management technologies, promoting sustainable agriculture and global natural resource management.

#### **Major Initiatives**

- Maintain a balance between protecting the environment and fostering production agriculture by assisting producers and landowners with conservation planning to develop wildlife-sustaining watersheds and wetlands, reduce erosion, and improve soil quality.
- Strengthen partnerships between USDA, conservation districts, and State conservation agencies and improve the technical capacity of districts to build sustainable resource management programs by increasing State and local funding of conservation programs.
- Focus research efforts on sustainable agriculture and forestry initiatives; fully utilize data collection programs, including the Census of Agriculture, to collect cross-disciplinary farm population data and create a Natural Resource Database to provide a state-of-the-forest-and-land baseline.
- Improve the quality of rural watersheds and water quality by 25 percent by the year 2000.
- Implement the Integrated Pest Management initiative to provide producers with simple, cost-effective pest management practices that lead to adoption of effective techniques to reduce harmful effects on the environment.



- Promote conservation planning and environmentally sustainable management approaches that improve soil quality, intensify soil conservation on non-highly erodible cropland, and facilitate transitions to sustainable systems on the most highly erodible cropland.

#### ***Other Entities Involved***

USDA maintains direct linkages and cooperates with a number of Federal agencies to provide conservation guidance. Many programs carried out by other agencies rely on the technical expertise unique to USDA, such as the Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Programs of the Department of the Interior, and the Chesapeake Bay Agreement, the National Estuary Program and Clean Lakes Program of the EPA. USDA has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with EPA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Corps of Engineers to conduct programs to protect wetlands. USDA works with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to carry out watershed activities, and with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Geological Survey to obtain precipitation and runoff data.

### **■ 3.2 Promote sustainable management of public lands; protect and restore critical forest land, rangeland, wilderness, and aquatic ecosystems**

The National Forests comprise approximately 8 percent of the land area of the United States, and encompass a broad range of natural resources including water, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation opportunity, timber, minerals, and forage for livestock. Individual resource conditions vary widely—some are in acceptable condition, some are deteriorating, and some pose immediate problems.

Adopting a sustainable management approach, USDA is working to protect

fragile ecosystems and conserve biological diversity, including native plant and animal species, on National Forest and non-Federal forest lands. Through collaboration and shared responsibility with adjacent landowners and communities, and State, local, and tribal governments, we are managing the National Forests to promote the sustainability of ecosystems, ensuring their health and productivity. By living within the limits of the land and integrating appropriate scientific information with economic and social factors, we maintain and enhance the quality of the environment in order to meet current and future needs.

Water quality and quantity are important to maintaining healthy ecosystems, and Federal forests and rangelands are important sources of water. Forest health is a growing concern as changing ecological conditions, rural and urban wilderness interfaces, and invasions of exotic pests have contributed to the deteriorating health of forested lands. USDA agencies are coordinating efforts to restore and sustain a healthy ecological balance.

#### ***Strategies to Achieve This Objective***

The FS manages National Forest System lands and provides research, information, and assistance to State and private foresters to promote multiple-use, sustained-yield forestry practices for sensible management of non-Federal forest resources. CSREES is the primary link to university and other State partners in the extension of agricultural and natural resource science to rural areas. APHIS protects agricultural ecosystems against the introduction of foreign animal and plant pests. ARS provides basic and long-term research on sustainable air, soil, and water quality management.

#### ***Major Initiatives***

- Protect the health and diversity of all National Forest ecosystems by letting fire play an appropriate role, protecting threatened and endangered species habitat, controlling exotic insect and



disease threats, and giving special emphasis to fragile aquatic and riparian areas.

- Restore deteriorated ecosystems in the National Forests to meet the goals of individual forest plans; maintain and increase populations of threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, and promote healthy forest conditions.
- Help communities upstream from public lands reduce flooding and erosion, improve water quality and quantity, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat, via structural and non-structural measures as well as planning assistance.
- Promote conservation management and planning approaches that prevent water quality impairment, and provide coordinated assistance to watersheds in need of conservation.
- Develop healthy and productive wildlife-sustaining watersheds and wetlands by helping producers implement cooperative, regional approaches to grazing land conservation, and by assisting landowners and communities to implement economically sound and environmentally sustainable land uses.
- Clean up abandoned mines and other hazardous waste sites, to restore National Forest System land and water resources to a healthy and diverse condition.
- Promote uses for public lands that provide public benefits such as clean water, recreation, and commodity outputs, within the capabilities of ecosystems.

#### ***Other Entities Involved***

Statutes governing the management of National Forests vest some responsibilities in other Federal agencies, requiring coordination on the ground and at policymaking levels. USDA works with EPA on water quality issues and hazardous waste management, and with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service on threatened and

endangered species designations. Certain determinations regarding minerals management are made by BLM. Many western forests are adjacent to or intermingled with the lands of the National Park Service or BLM, and this necessitates close cooperation to achieve ecosystem management objectives over the broad landscape.

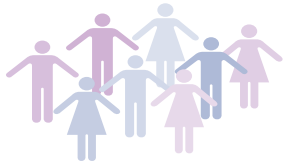
## **Management Initiatives**

### **Provide Effective Customer Service and Efficient Program Delivery**

An overarching principle of USDA operations is good management of our resources—human, capital, information, and other resources. The public demands that Government operate fairly, effectively, and efficiently, and as resources become more constrained, we must seek every opportunity to reengineer our service delivery capabilities, improve our data systems and processes, provide better program management information, improve communications with the public, and eliminate inefficiencies in our general operations.

#### **■ 1. Ensure that all customers and employees are treated fairly and equitably, with dignity and respect**

We value and promote the tenets and ideals of fair treatment for our customers and program beneficiaries, and equal employment opportunity for our employees and applicants. In many ways, our struggles echo our Nation's struggles. For too long USDA has been viewed as ignoring serious, pervasive civil rights problems. Although we cannot change the world, we will change our little corner of the world. Our words and actions must demonstrate our commitment to equal opportunity for all employ-



*The Secretary appointed a Civil Rights Action Team to investigate a backlog of discrimination complaints, and develop a plan for reaching resolution. The Team released a Civil Rights Action Plan which we are currently implementing to eliminate the existing backlog of civil rights complaints.*

ees, and equal treatment of our customers and program participants. We must embrace and value diversity, and strengthen our commitment to an equitable and discrimination-free USDA.

The Secretary appointed a Civil Rights Action Team to investigate a backlog of discrimination complaints, and develop a plan for reaching resolution. The Team released a Civil Rights Action Plan which we are currently implementing to eliminate the existing backlog of civil rights complaints. As part of that resolution, we have initiated a review of administrative and program policies and resources to focus more attention on civil rights and equal employment opportunity, and we are strengthening outreach efforts to underrepresented customers. We are reviewing our administrative appeals process to assure a fair, timely, and impartial process for appealing adverse program decisions. We are also reforming the program and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint systems to improve timeliness and responsiveness, and developing a strategic outreach plan which will hold Agency Heads accountable, through a civil rights element in performance standards, for establishing a well-trained, diverse, multiple-skilled staff to perform civil rights functions and for implementing agency outreach plans. Our goal is to assure that USDA has the best civil rights record in the Government by year 2000.

#### **Strategies to Achieve This Objective**

All USDA agencies are committed to an effective civil rights program in USDA. The Assistant Secretary for Administration has primary responsibility.

#### **Major Initiatives**

- Eliminate existing backlog of civil rights complaints.
- Develop an organizational structure that supports an effective civil rights program, with annual civil rights training for all employees and reforms to the civil rights complaint system, to

improve timeliness, responsiveness, and the ability to resolve underlying problems.

- Demonstrate the Department's commitment to serving the needs of minority and limited-resource customers by providing outreach and targeting funds to increase their participation in USDA programs.
- Improve management commitment to and accountability for civil rights in USDA, promoting equity for employees and customers and ensuring workforce diversity and fair treatment in program delivery.
- Establish an Office of Outreach to coordinate Departmentwide efforts to ensure that we reach all who need or can benefit from USDA programs and services.
- Establish a Departmentwide workforce planning and recruitment effort to improve workforce diversity.

#### **Entities Involved**

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) provides oversight and coordination of all Federal EEO regulations, practices and policies. The EEOC also decides all appeals from Federal agency findings on EEO complaints and decisions. The Department of Justice defends the United States Government in Federal Court in cases brought by employees under Federal EEO law.

## **■ 2. Improve customer service by streamlining and restructuring county offices**

USDA agencies are striving to improve their service to customers, reducing red tape and paperwork reporting burdens, and implementing regulatory reform initiatives. Following Vice President Gore's reinvention initiative, the Department has undertaken a number of significant initiatives to improve customer service. One

major effort is the Administrative Convergence initiative, which will consolidate the administrative functions of FSA, RD, and NRCS at each organizational level. Another initiative is co-location of field offices in Service Centers. Co-location will enable these agencies to simplify and standardize administrative systems and procedures, make better use of technology, and simplify procedures for farm and rural residents.

Reorganization and streamlining of the Department has eliminated more than 13,700 staff years since 1993, reduced the total number of agencies from 43 to 31, and closed more than 1,300 county-based field offices since December 1994. By the year 2002, Department plans project a total reduction of 16,400 staff years and estimate savings of \$8 billion from consolidating 3,700 field offices into 2,550 Service Centers. We are aware of the impacts—perceived and real—on our customers, and we are committed to making customer service a top priority and central focus of our efforts. We support the traditional structure of agriculture in America, and we are committed to serving small and medium-size agricultural producers in spite of our reduced numbers. We are working on improvements in field office outreach to minority, female, and limited-resource producers, assuring adherence to civil rights and fair treatment to all, and we are committed to service improvements to help producers survive the changes in agriculture which will come in future years.

An important facilitator of field office restructuring is the Dedicated Loan Origination and Servicing (DLOS) system developed by RHS to improve the service delivery of loans for single-family housing. DLOS allows automation of many functions previously performed in field offices and centralization of those functions in St. Louis, Missouri. In addition to the “one-stop service” benefits achieved from field office consolidations, implementation of the DLOS system is

expected to generate savings by reducing the number of borrower defaults.

**Strategies to Achieve This Objective**  
FSA, RD, NRCS, Departmental Administration, and Office of the Chief Information Officer are working together with Conservation District Partners to accomplish this goal.

#### **Major Initiatives**

- Complete co-location of field offices by July 1, 1998.
- Reengineer processes to improve service at Service Centers, particularly reducing the paperwork burden on farmers.
- Consolidate the administrative functions of FSA, RD, and NRCS, at headquarters and in Service Centers, to reduce duplication of effort and provide a single administrative support structure for these agencies at all levels.

### **■ 3. Create a unified system of information technology management**

Providing information and productivity-enhancing technological tools to support the diverse and complex set of farm, food, conservation, rural development, forestry, and research programs USDA operates is a major challenge. A rapidly changing operating environment demands constant attention to meeting business information needs. USDA is dedicated to improving information technology management, including implementation of a Departmentwide information architecture to ensure that business objectives drive investments, and establishing the mechanisms to ensure that those investments are properly managed.

Although we have made significant progress in improving our information systems and management, we do not have the degree of interconnectivity we need to make major improvements in our



management of information. We continue to receive unacceptable opinions on our audited financial statements, due in part to inaccurate financial information from our systems. We know that the efficiency of some of our processes will improve when our systems are modernized, and we have begun several process and system modernization projects, such as the Modernization of Administrative Processes (MAP) project, and the Financial Information System Vision and Strategy (FISVIS) project.

In response to the new requirements of the Information Technology Management Reform Act (the Clinger-Cohen Act), as well as today's environment of constrained budgets and demands for more efficient customer service, USDA has set a new course for improved management of information technology. We are completing an information technology plan to assure that USDA agencies are fully capable of communicating with each other, and to reduce spending on information technology by 10 percent. We are focusing on strengthening the process for review, approval, and coordination of significant investments, improved project management, and review of existing capability to eliminate unnecessary overlap and duplication.

#### ***Strategies to Achieve This Objective***

All USDA agencies are involved in improving information technology management. The Chief Information Officer has primary responsibility for the oversight and management of the Department's information technology resources.

#### ***Major Initiatives***

- Implement a Departmentwide Information Technology Architecture, including technical standards, to ensure that agency information systems are compatible, investments in information technology support and enhance business needs, and information technology investments are prop-

erly managed and linked to the USDA budget process.

- Identify the needs of business partners at the State and local level for technical support, and improve Federal decision making regarding the selection and deployment of information technology to meet those needs.
- Identify opportunities to use information technology to streamline program and administrative activities.
- Implement a professional development strategy to ensure that USDA staff have the necessary skills to effectively manage information technology.
- Improve telecommunications within USDA and reduce telecommunications spending by 10 percent over the next 5 years.

#### **■ 4. Improve financial management and reporting**

USDA has made significant progress toward improved financial management, but much work remains to be done. Two primary goals are implementation of a single, integrated financial information system, and financial statements that warrant an unqualified audit opinion.

In 1993, USDA initiated the Financial Information System Vision and Strategy (FISVIS) project, to completely reconstruct the Department's financial systems and related processes. The FISVIS project has established Departmentwide accounting standards and standard definitions for accounting terms, and will provide timely, reliable financial information for preparing financial statements, resolving many of the problems causing unacceptable audit opinions. Development of cost accounting standards, modernized methods of payment and collection, improved management of assets and receivables, and improved processes for administering grants and agreements with

non-Federal organizations—all projects currently underway—will improve stewardship of USDA resources and strengthen management accountability.

### ***Strategies to Achieve This Objective***

All USDA agencies are involved in financial management improvements. The CFO has primary responsibility for financial management review, guidance, and oversight in USDA.

### ***Major Initiatives***

- Implement a single, integrated Departmentwide financial information system.
- Establish and implement USDA cost accounting standards.
- Strengthen USDA's management accountability and control processes, in conformance with the Federal Managers Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA).
- Achieve an unqualified audit opinion on the Department's financial statements.
- Implement the requirements of the Cash Management Improvement Act and the Debt Collection Improvement Act to safeguard assets and improve the processes for payment and collection of debts.
- Streamline Departmental processes for administering grants and agreements with non-Federal entities.

## **External Factors**

Agency plans detail multiple and diverse external factors impacting on their ability to achieve the Secretary's goals and objectives with their planned strategies and initiatives, including Congressional action, budget constraints, weather, and other factors.

## **Program Evaluations**

Agency plans detail the various ways in which programs will be evaluated. Current data systems are not fully capable of producing necessary performance evaluation data, however, systems currently planned or being implemented, such as the Foundation Financial Information System, when completed, will provide significant performance measurement data.

## **Conclusion**

USDA truly is a multi-focused, multi-dimensional organization of component agencies working together to “enhance the quality of life for the American people by supporting production agriculture; ensuring a safe, accessible, and affordable food supply; caring for agricultural, forest, and range lands; supporting sound development of rural communities; providing economic opportunities for farm and rural residents; expanding global markets for agricultural and forest products and services, and working to reduce hunger in America and throughout the world.”

### **APPENDICES follow:**

1. **Mission Area and Agency Acronyms**
2. **USDA Profile**
3. **USDA Operating Environment, 1997-2002**
4. **Linkage of USDA Goals/Subgoals to Agency Goals**

## Appendix 1 ..... Mission Area and Agency Acronyms

<b>AARC</b>	Alternative Agricultural Research and Commercialization Corporation
<b>AMS</b>	Agricultural Marketing Service
<b>APHIS</b>	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
<b>ARS</b>	Agricultural Research Service
<b>CNPP</b>	Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
<b>CSREES</b>	Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
<b>DA</b>	Departmental Administration
<b>ERS</b>	Economic Research Service
<b>FAS</b>	Foreign Agricultural Service
<b>FCS</b>	Food and Consumer Service
<b>FFAS</b>	Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services
<b>FNCS</b>	Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services
<b>FS</b>	Forest Service
<b>FSA</b>	Farm Service Agency
<b>FSIS</b>	Food Safety and Inspection Service
<b>GIPSA</b>	Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration
<b>MRP</b>	Marketing and Regulatory Programs
<b>NAD</b>	National Appeals Division
<b>NASS</b>	National Agricultural Statistics Service
<b>NRCS</b>	Natural Resources Conservation Service
<b>NRE</b>	Natural Resources and Environment
<b>OBPA</b>	Office of Budget and Program Analysis
<b>OC</b>	Office of Communications
<b>OCE</b>	Office of the Chief Economist
<b>OCFO</b>	Office of the Chief Financial Officer
<b>OCIO</b>	Office of the Chief Information Officer
<b>OGC</b>	Office of the General Counsel
<b>OIG</b>	Office of Inspector General
<b>RBS</b>	Rural Business-Cooperative Service
<b>RD</b>	Rural Development
<b>REE</b>	Research, Education, and Economics
<b>RHS</b>	Rural Housing Service
<b>RMA</b>	Risk Management Agency
<b>RUS</b>	Rural Utilities Service

## Appendix 2 ..... USDA Profile

USDA is organized by mission areas, agencies, and departmental offices. Each mission area includes one or more agencies and is focused on a specific portion of the USDA program mission. Departmental offices support and assist program activities. USDA agencies cooperate closely to achieve Department goals, each agency fulfilling its portion of the Department's responsibilities.

The strategic plans of each agency provide more detailed information on the mission, goals, and performance measures of each organization.

### **Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services (FFAS) mission area**

—secures the long-term vitality and global competitiveness of American agriculture. The FFAS mission is accomplished through administering agricultural commodity programs and the Conservation Reserve Program, and by helping farm communities deal with fluctuations of the marketplace and natural disasters. FFAS promotes economic opportunity for American farmers by developing new export markets, implementing initiatives to combat unfair competition, and providing food assistance to food-deficit countries. Three agencies make up the FFAS mission area: the Farm Service Agency, the Foreign Agricultural Service, and the Risk Management Agency.

■ **Farm Service Agency (FSA)** ensures the well-being of American agriculture and the American public through efficient and equitable administration of agricultural commodity and farm loan programs, conservation, environmental, and emergency assistance programs, domestic and international food assistance, and international export credit programs. FSA administers farm loan assistance programs through direct and guaranteed loans that offer farm ownership, operating, and emergency loans to eligible farmers who are temporarily unable to obtain private, commercial credit; and provides conservation and disaster assistance.

FSA coordinates environmental and conservation efforts, particularly the Conservation Reserve Program, with NRCS, CSREES, FS, ERS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

■ **Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)** opens, expands, and maintains global market opportunities through international trade, cooperation, and sustainable development activities which secure the long-term economic vitality and global competitiveness of America's rural communities and related food and agricultural enterprises. The primary goal of FAS is to increase the value of American farm, food, fish, and forestry exports, and to represent the diverse interests of the food and agricultural sector abroad. FAS monitors and assesses global food aid needs and promotes international agricultural trade policies that provide market access for American agricultural commodities. APHIS, ARS, and FSIS work with FAS to ensure the health and safety of our food export products and protect our export opportunities against unjustified trade barriers.

■ **Risk Management Agency (RMA)** provides each agricultural producer the opportunity to achieve financial stability through effective risk management tools. The primary goal of RMA is to foster, at reasonable cost, an environment of financial stability, safety and confidence, enabling the American agricultural producer to manage the perils associated with nature and markets. A key component of the delivery structure is the private sector crop insurance industry, which provides servicing for RMA insurance products. Additionally, RMA provides educational opportunities to help producers



effectively manage risk by choosing appropriate risk management tools. RMA works with Farm Service Agency and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, to provide an effective safety net.

## **Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services (FNCS) mission area**

—administers food assistance programs to alleviate food insecurity and promote healthy diets for children and low-income adults; coordinates nutrition policy, and provides nutrition education for all Americans. FNCS administers the Nation's food and nutrition programs through two agencies which comprise the FNCS mission area: the Food and Consumer Service and the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion.

■ **Food and Consumer Service (FCS)** provides children and needy families better access to food and a more healthful diet through its food assistance programs and comprehensive nutrition education efforts. FCS food assistance programs account for over one-half of the USDA budget. FCS administers the Food Stamp Program, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch Program, and the School Breakfast Program. Through Commodity Assistance Programs, FCS provides food commodities for soup kitchens, food banks, and emergency feeding organizations. FCS also provides food packages to targeted needy groups such as Native Americans living on reservations, and low-income elderly persons.

FCS works with AMS and FSA to provide commodities, and with ARS to monitor food and nutrient consumption. CSREES assists the FCS mission by providing nutrition education through Extension Service programs, to improve the food choices of American families.

■ **Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP)** improves the nutritional status of Americans by serving as the focal point within the Department for linking scientific research to the consumer. CNPP coordinates nutrition policy in USDA and provides overall leadership in nutrition education for consumers. The Center coordinates with the Department of Health and Human Services in the review, revision, and dissemination of the "Dietary Guidelines for Americans." CNPP works closely with USDA agencies to coordinate activities relating to human nutrition.

## **Food Safety mission area**

—ensures that the Nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products is safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged, as required by the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act. Food safety programs are carried out through the Food Safety and Inspection Service.

■ **Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)** regulates meat and poultry products moving in interstate and foreign commerce, inspecting animals and birds at slaughter and processed products at various stages of the production process. FSIS is also responsible for informing the public about food safety issues.

FSIS works with ERS, ARS, and CSREES to coordinate research of food safety issues, and with APHIS on instances and patterns of animal diseases. FSIS works with the CDC, EPA, and the Food and Drug Administration to promote adoption of food

safety programs and to manage and carry out food safety activities, and with FCS to disseminate food safety information. FAS supports FSIS in food safety discussions in the food export market.

## **Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) mission area**

—facilitates the domestic and international marketing of American agricultural products and ensures the health and care of animals and plants, while improving market competitiveness and the economy for the overall benefit of both consumers and American agriculture. MRP agencies are active and influential participants in international and national standards-setting, through international organizations and Federal-State cooperation. Three agencies operate under the MRP mission area: the Agricultural Marketing Service, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

■ **Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)** facilitates the strategic marketing of agricultural products in domestic and international markets, while ensuring fair trading practices and promoting a competitive and efficient marketplace, to the benefit of producers, traders, and consumers of American food and fiber products. AMS focuses agency services to improve the marketing of American agricultural products in international markets and develop new marketing services to increase customer satisfaction. AMS works closely with FAS in international marketing, with FSA in the strategic marketing of agricultural products, and with FCS, NASS, and CSREES with outreach and education and to enhance services to their customers.

■ **Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)** leads the way in anticipating and responding to issues involving animal and plant health, conflicts with wildlife, environmental stewardship, and animal well-being. APHIS protects American agriculture from agricultural pests and diseases, while ensuring fair access to foreign markets for American agricultural products. APHIS works closely with the FFAS mission area to maintain or expand access to foreign markets, with FSIS on food safety issues, with NRE agencies on environmental issues, and with ARS on the application of science and technology to the full range of agency services.

■ **Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA)** facilitates the marketing of livestock, poultry, meat, cereals, oilseeds, and related agricultural products, and promotes fair and competitive trading practices for the overall benefit of consumers and American agriculture. GIPSA ensures open and competitive markets for livestock, poultry, and meat by investigating and monitoring industry trade practices. GIPSA also provides Federal grading standards and a national inspection and weighing system for grain and oilseeds. GIPSA works closely with APHIS, FAS, and ARS to facilitate international marketing, with OIG on investigative matters, and with AMS to obtain feedback from customers.

## **Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) mission area**

—provides national leadership to help people conserve, improve, and sustain our natural resources and environment. NRE is comprised of the Forest Service and the National

Resources Conservation Service, which share responsibility for fostering sound stewardship of public and private lands. FS and NRCS collaborate to provide assistance to owners of non-industrial private forests, wetlands, wilderness areas, and rangelands.

■ **Forest Service (FS)** cares for the land and serves people—to achieve high-quality land management under the multiple-use, sustained yield concept, to meet the diverse needs of people. FS provides leadership in the management, protection, and use of the Nation's publicly owned forests and rangelands for sustained yields of renewable resources. Sustainable benefits are achieved through science-based management of ecosystems, including restoration of deteriorated ecosystems and protection of healthy ecosystems, to provide a sustainable level of public goods and services such as recreation, forage, timber, and community assistance.

■ **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** provides national leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, improve, and sustain our natural resources and environment. NRCS works with American farmers, ranchers, other landowners, and communities to conserve, improve and sustain natural resources on private land. NRCS assists farmers and ranchers to meet the increasingly complex challenge of protecting soil, water, and related resources while sustaining the profitable production of food and fiber. Privately owned land (excluding forest land) comprises nearly one-half of the Nation's land in the lower 48 States.

FS and NRCS work closely with many agencies within and outside of USDA to support conservation programs and to provide science-based soil and natural resource information. FSA assists with funding for conservation programs which require stewardship of soil, water, air, and wildlife resources on America's farmland and ranches. REE provides analysis and assessments of natural resource use to protect and maintain healthy and diverse ecosystems, and cooperates in research, education, and program delivery. RD works with FS and NRCS to provide assistance to rural communities to build sustainable resource management programs, influencing the economic development of rural communities and contributing to the safety net created by the Farm Bill. Internationally, FS and NRCS work with FAS to support natural resource conservation worldwide.

## **Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area**

— is dedicated to the creation of a safe, sustainable, competitive U.S. food and fiber system and strong, healthy communities, families, and youth through integrated research, analysis, and education. Through the Agricultural Research Service; the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; the Economic Research Service; and the National Agricultural Statistics Service, REE provides research, analysis, and information to benefit consumers and promote agricultural prosperity and sustainable agricultural practices in harmony with the environment.

■ **Agricultural Research Service (ARS)** conducts research to develop and transfer solutions to agricultural problems, to ensure high-quality, safe food, to sustain a competitive agricultural economy, to maintain a healthy environment, and to enhance the natural resource base. ARS is the principal in-house research agency of USDA, performing basic, applied, and developmental research, developing agricultural products and techniques through long-term, high-risk research. ARS research is associated with higher crop yields, improved breeding and biotechnology techniques, development of

new products, and environmentally sensitive farming techniques. ARS works closely with USDA agencies to develop research agendas and to provide a scientific base for program operations.

■ **Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)** benefits people, communities, and the Nation through work with its partners and customers to advance research, extension, and higher education in the food and agricultural sciences and related environmental and human sciences. CSREES is the primary Federal link to university and other partners in cooperative programming in the food and agricultural sciences, and in the extension of food and agricultural science services to rural areas. CSREES works closely with State and local partners to carry out USDA's educational and outreach objectives.

■ **Economic Research Service (ERS)** provides economic and other social science information and analysis for public and private decisions on agriculture, food, natural resources, and rural development. ERS works in cooperation with other agencies on research initiatives such as the Pathogen Reduction Initiative; Nutrition Education; the Conservation Reserve Program; Wetland Reserve and Environmental Quality Incentives Programs; Integrated Pest Management; the Fund for Rural America; water quality programs; and rural community enhancement programs.

■ **National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)** serves the United States, its agriculture and its rural communities by providing meaningful, accurate, and objective statistical information and services. NASS provides the official USDA production, economic, and environmental estimates. NASS works with USDA agencies on projects and programs such as Pathogen Reduction; Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Regulation; the Pesticide Data Program; livestock management studies; farm loan subsidy estimates; and satellite imagery.

## Rural Development (RD) mission area

—provides financial and technical assistance to rural America to improve their quality of life and to help individuals and businesses compete in the global marketplace. Rural Development administers a variety of loan, loan guarantee, and grant programs, supplementing private credit-granting entities through three agencies: Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, and Rural Utilities Service. These agencies provide rural housing and rural community facility loan and grant programs; business and cooperative development programs; telephone, electric, water, and sewer programs; and technical assistance for housing and community facilities projects. RD agencies provide technical assistance in the areas of business and industry; cooperative development; cooperative research and education; water and waste disposal; electric power; and telecommunications, including distance-learning and telemedicine. RD works with FSA and RMA to increase the availability and accessibility of credit in rural areas, and with FS, NRCS, ARS, ERS, CSREES, and AMS to improve the rural environment.

■ **Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS)** enhances the quality of life for all rural Americans by providing leadership in building competitive businesses and cooperatives that can prosper in the global marketplace. RBS programs invest financial

resources and technical assistance in businesses, cooperatives, and communities, building partnerships that leverage public and private resources to stimulate rural economic activity by meeting business credit needs in underserved areas. Major RBS programs include commercial lending, revolving loan funds, cooperative development, technical assistance, empowerment programs, and cooperative research and education services.

■ **Rural Housing Service (RHS)** improves the quality of life in rural America by helping to build competitive, vibrant rural communities through community facilities and housing programs. RHS administers programs providing affordable housing and essential community facilities, technical assistance, and outreach to rural residents and communities unable to obtain credit from commercial sources at reasonable rates and terms. RHS provides financial and management assistance to rural residents and communities and loans and grants to public or private nonprofit organizations to purchase sites for the development of housing, or to repair and rehabilitate housing for low-income families, and administers programs to provide loans, grants, and technical assistance to rural communities to assist the development of fire protection services, health clinics, libraries, and other community facilities in rural areas.

■ **Rural Utilities Service (RUS)** serves a leading role in improving the quality of life in rural America by administering electrification, telecommunications, and water and wastewater disposal programs in a service-oriented, forward-looking and financially responsible manner. RUS administers nationwide programs providing loans, grants, and technical assistance to develop modern, affordable technological infrastructures and essential service facilities in rural areas.

### **Alternative Agricultural Research and Commercialization (AARC) Corporation**

—expands interest, encourages creativity, provides information, and supports commercialization in venture start-ups and small companies through modest, early-stage direct investment. AARC serves as a bridge between technology and commercialization, providing information and investment capital to establish profitable, renewable resource-based products and companies. AARC funds support the commercialization of new industrial and consumer products and uses for agricultural and forestry materials and animal by-products which expand the use of farm and forestry materials and agri-industrial products. Preference is given to projects that provide employment in rural communities and are environmentally friendly.

### **Departmental Administration (DA)**

— contributes to accomplishing USDA's mission through leadership and services in administrative management. DA provides oversight for crosscutting administrative services operating in each of USDA's seven mission areas, and centralized servicing of procurement, personnel, property, and civil rights activities. DA also provides goods and services directly through USDA central services programs, such as mail, facilities management, and health and safety, and services in the areas of emergency preparedness, contract and program appeals, administrative adjudication, internal energy conservation, recycling, and hazardous and other waste management.



## Departmental Offices

Department-level Offices provide centralized leadership, coordination, and support for the policy and administrative functions of the Department, helping program agencies to deliver services to all USDA customers and stakeholders.

■ **National Appeals Division (NAD)** conducts impartial evidentiary administrative appeal hearings of adverse program decisions made by officers, employees, or committees of designated agencies of USDA and conducts reviews of determinations issued by NAD hearing officers when requested by a party to the appeal. Operating as an independent agency, NAD is responsible for all administrative appeals arising from program activities or decisions of FSA, RMA, NRCS, and the RD mission area, as assigned by the Secretary.

■ **Office of Budget and Program Analysis (OBPA)** provides centralized coordination and direction for the Department's budget, legislative, and regulatory functions, and provides analysis and evaluation to support the implementation of critical policies. OBPA administers the Department's budgetary functions, including development and presentation of budget-related matters to the committees of the Congress, the news media, and the public. OBPA reviews program and legislative proposals for program- and budget-related implications, analyzes program and resource issues and alternatives, and prepares summaries of pertinent data to aid Departmental policy officials and agency program managers in the decision-making process.

■ **Office of Communications (OC)** provides leadership, coordination, expertise, and counsel for the development of consistent and timely communications strategies, products, and services that describe USDA initiatives, programs, and functions, so that the widest scope of Americans have information that is helpful in their everyday lives. OC is the central source of public information. The office responds to mission area and agency communications needs by providing centralized information services using the latest, most effective and efficient technology and standards for graphic design, photography, video and audio tape production, teleconferencing, printing, and other communications products and services.

■ **Office of the Chief Economist (OCE)** advises the Secretary on the economic situation in agricultural markets and the economic implications of policies and programs affecting American agriculture and rural communities. OCE serves as the focal point for the Nation's economic intelligence and analysis, risk assessment, and cost-benefit analyses related to domestic and international food and agriculture, and advises the Secretary on the economic consequences of alternative policy, program, and legislative proposals. Through the World Agricultural Outlook Board OCE coordinates agricultural data used to develop USDA situation and outlook information. The Office of Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis promotes effective and efficient regulation of hazards to human health, safety, and the environment.

■ **Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO)** provides financial management leadership and service to support quality program delivery, through partnerships with program agencies and departmental offices. OCFO provides effective financial management policies and internal controls; financial systems to produce useful, reliable, and timely finan-



cial and related programmatic information; financial analysis and performance reports; and integration of budget execution and finance functions. OCFO supports financial management initiatives of concern to program agencies, including program integrity, management accountability and Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act reporting, preparation of consolidated financial statements, and implementation of GPRA.

■ **Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)** strategically acquires and uses information technology resources to improve the quality, timeliness, and cost effectiveness of USDA service delivery to its customers. OCIO provides policy guidance, leadership, coordination, and direction to the Department's information management and information technology investment activities. This includes long-range planning, investment guidance, coordination of inter-agency information resource management projects, and implementing standards to promote information exchange and technical interoperability. OCIO also provides Departmentwide telecommunications and data center management.

■ **Office of the General Counsel (OGC)** determines legal policy and directs the performance of all legal work conducted by the Department. Legal services are centralized within OGC, and the General Counsel reports directly to the Secretary. The wide diversity of programs within USDA generates demand for a broad range of legal services which are provided by the Office of the General Counsel. As part of those services, OGC provides legal advice to the officials of the Department; reviews regulations, correspondence, contracts, agreements, and other documents; and participates in the prosecution or defense of litigation involving agencies or officials of the Department.

■ **Office of Inspector General (OIG)** conducts audits, investigations, and evaluations of USDA programs and operations to effect positive changes. OIG responds to issues most critical to USDA operations, preventing fraud and abuse by providing quality audit and investigative services, strengthening management and financial controls in USDA, and enhancing the economy and efficiency of the audit and investigative processes through the use of innovative techniques.

## Appendix 3 ..... **USDA Operating Environment, 1997-2002**

Predicting the operating environment of the future is a difficult task. To assist this effort, agency staff talked to customers, employees, and other Federal officials and stakeholders with whom they cooperate and partner, carefully reviewed present and anticipated responsibilities and legislation, and assessed the events or activities that could affect future operations. The following is a summary of major issues currently confronting USDA agencies, and basic assumptions about operations over the next 5 years. These and other expected impacts are described more fully in the mission area and agency strategic plans which follow.

### ■ **Legislation**

The 1996 Farm Bill set the direction for USDA programs into the 21st century, laying the framework for greater emphasis on conservation, phasing out farm subsidy payments tied to production levels, and establishing a “safety net” for farmers through risk management initiatives. Enactment of the 1996 Farm Bill provided the incentive for USDA to examine its services and the internal organizations which deliver those services, resulting in a partnership between FSA, RD, and NRCS to modernize information technologies and co-locate in field Service Centers to provide fully integrated program delivery to USDA customers.

In concert with the 1996 Farm Bill, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Welfare Reform) and other recently enacted legislation, such as the Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Act of 1990, the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), and the Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996 (the Clinger-Cohen Act), are affecting the programs and services we provide and the way in which they are delivered and accounted for. Changes to food assistance programs, principally the Food Stamp Program, brought about by Welfare Reform will continue to affect the Federal-State-local partnership for many years. The CFO Act laid the groundwork for improvements in financial management and financial information, to increase accountability and to provide better information to managers. GPRA requires program agencies and administrative offices to produce 5-year strategic plans to guide their operations, and to set goals, objectives, and performance measurement criteria by which their progress toward meeting those goals can be evaluated. The Clinger-Cohen Act establishes a Chief Information Officer and calls for improvements in management information technology, including implementation of an integrated information technology architecture to produce sound management information for decision-making.

We recognize that changing demands over time will change farm policy, and that as some of the 1996 Farm Bill provisions end in the year 2002, a new Farm Bill may be passed to take its place. Statutory and legislative modification is unpredictable for the long term, and this plan cannot prepare for reconstructions of agricultural policy over time. Our goal is to remain flexible, to be able to respond to new legislation quickly and efficiently.

### ■ **Agricultural Production/Trade**

A variety of technological, economic, and social forces combined in recent decades to reshape the structure of American agriculture and raise farm output. The number of farms is declining, and the trend in many sectors of the agricultural economy is

toward concentration into fewer and larger production and processing units, and vertical integration of production and processing (either by direct ownership or by contract). At the same time, small farms producing specialty crops are springing up within the rural-urban interface. These and other developments in the agricultural economy are forcing USDA to redefine its role. The 1996 Farm Bill mandates a Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture to identify the appropriate relationship of the Federal Government to production agriculture, and we eagerly await the convening of this forum and their guidance.

Global population increases, demographic changes, and economic growth will substantially increase the demand for agricultural products. Simultaneously, increased agricultural production and efficiency in other countries will require that American agriculture and agroforestry become more competitive. The growing importance of global trade to agriculture will require that USDA become even more actively involved in developing new foreign markets, and in bringing down artificial trade barriers. The development of new rules through GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), and other trade agreements will help open access to foreign markets.

### ■ Sustainable Development/Conservation

As populations increase and research and technology continue to change agriculture and the management of natural resources, relationships among people, the economy, and the land grow increasingly vital. USDA is committed to meeting the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. We support the vision of the President's Council on Sustainable Development of "a life-sustaining Earth," through achievement of a peaceful and equitable existence between a growing economy which provides opportunity for satisfying livelihoods for current generations and protection of the environment for future generations.

Management of cropland, rangeland, and forests on public and private lands is key to sustainable development. The challenge is to ensure that the needs of the agricultural community are balanced by the needs of consumers and the environment. Prevention of negative environmental consequences such as erosion, salinization, over-fertilization, and impaired water quality is essential to human health and well-being.

USDA is partnering with other Federal agencies and local communities to achieve the links and create the balances that are necessary for sustainable development. We are reaching out to assist landowners and policy makers through new partnerships, to resolve concerns that affect farmers and ranchers as well as urban and suburban landowners.

Americans expect Government to anticipate and actively address problems of broad public interest, such as environmental quality and conservation, and to make choices in the public interest. People and private institutions are being asked to make choices in the public interest, such as adopting environmentally sensitive production practices. Decision makers must understand the impacts their decisions will have on their business and on society. Our responsibility is to assist the making of informed choices by producing sound, science-based research and information.

### ■ Information Technology

USDA understands that information is a strategic asset. Customers and constituents are taking advantage of the rapid changes in information technology that provide greater access to information. Small farmers and large agricultural enterprises alike are mak-

ing investments in information technology to keep abreast of USDA research and program changes. "Precision farming" is a term becoming increasingly familiar as more farmers rely upon electronic technology to access the latest information on research, weather, markets, program development, improvements in seed, production techniques or equipment, or technical assistance from county offices. The Department supports the President's National Information Infrastructure Initiative, providing investment funds in excess of \$100 million annually to help rural communities bring modern telecommunications technology to rural Americans.

This increasing demand creates concomitant requirements for USDA to furnish many kinds of information quickly, to be sure the information we provide is current and reliable, and that access to new information is provided equally to all. USDA is undertaking a concerted effort to implement a single information technology architecture, and to ensure that our use of technology reflects the business needs of our agencies and our customers. USDA supports the formation of partnerships between agencies and industry to better manage information technology resources in a time of constrained budgets, to provide more efficient service, and to improve the way we conduct business.

### ■ The Economy

USDA services will continue to be required by all segments of society. We are maintaining the Food Stamp Program, the Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch Program, and other food and gleaning programs. We are reviewing lending practices and safety net programs to assure fair treatment and equal access to all farmers, and to protect the economic base of our farms and rural communities. We are currently conducting a pilot revenue insurance program under which producers of wheat, feed grains, soybeans, or other crops may elect to receive insurance against loss of revenue stemming from either low prices or poor harvest. We are developing a safety net strategy to mitigate the risks posed by floods, droughts, fires, and other natural disasters that threaten the economic stability of American agriculture, and we are developing a program of education for the agricultural community on other risk management strategies and income protection programs.

We recognize the continuing effects on rural communities of the movement away from a commodities-based to a service-based economy, and we are focusing efforts to address this issue. We are seeking new partnerships with State and local governments and the private sector to meet the needs of rural communities, which do not easily draw investment through the marketplace.

### ■ Budget Reductions/Downsizing

The President's commitment to a balanced budget by 2002 will continue to affect the resources available to USDA and all Federal agencies. USDA has streamlined and downsized the workforce by more than 13,700 people since FY 1993. Over the next 5 years we anticipate additional reductions in personnel.

We are reinventing operations to improve effectiveness and efficiency by establishing partnerships with other Federal entities, State and local governments, and the private sector; by eliminating programs, introducing regulatory reform, and developing an increasingly entrepreneurial Government that relies on privatization of services and franchising of administrative activities.













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## **Appendix 4..... Linkage of USDA Goals/Subgoals to Agency Goals**









This appendix demonstrates the relationship between USDA-wide goals and subgoals and the goals in individual agency plans. Details can be found in the agency plans that follow. Departmental Administration and Departmental offices' goals support all goals of the Department but are not included in this appendix.

## Linkage of USDA Goals/Subgoals to Agency Goals

## Agency Goals, by Mission Area

Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services Mission Area			
Farm Service Agency			
<b>Goal 1</b>	Farm Programs - Provide an economic safety net through farm income support to eligible producers, cooperatives, and associations to help improve the economic stability and viability of the agricultural sector and to ensure the production of an adequate and reasonable priced supply of food and fiber.		
<b>Goal 2</b>	Conservation and Environment - Assist agricultural producers and landowners in achieving a high level of stewardship of soil, water, and wildlife resources on America's farmland and ranches while protecting the human and natural environment.		
<b>Goal 3</b>	Farm Loans - Assist eligible individuals and families in becoming successful farmers and ranchers.		
<b>Goal 4</b>	Commodity Operations - Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of FSA's commodity acquisition, procurement, storage, and distribution activities to support domestic and international food assistance programs, and administer the U.S. Warehouse Act (USWA).		
Foreign Agricultural Service			
<b>Goal 1</b>	Expand export opportunities for U.S. agricultural, fish, and forest products.		
<b>Goal 2</b>	Promote world food security.		

Continued

GOAL 2 Ensure food for the hungry, and a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply					GOAL 3 Promote sensible management of our natural resources	
2.1 Reduce hunger by assuring low income households access to adequate supplies of nutritious food.	2.2 Reduce the incidence of foodborne illness and ensure that commercial supplies are safe and wholesome.	2.3 Promote gleaning and other food recovery programs.	2.4 Improve dietary practices and promote a healthy, well-nourished population through nutrition education and research.	2.5 Enhance world food security and assist in the reduction of world hunger.	3.1 Promote sustainable production of food and fiber products while maintaining a quality environment and strong natural resource base.	3.2 Promote sustainable management of public lands; protect and restore critical forest land, rangeland, wilderness and aquatic ecosystems.
						
						
						












## Linkage of USDA Goals/Subgoals to Agency Goals

## Agency Goals, by Mission Area

Food Safety Mission Area			
Food Safety and Inspection Service			
Goal 1	Enhance the public health by minimizing foodborne illness from meat, poultry, and egg products.		
Marketing and Regulatory Programs Mission Area			
Agricultural Marketing Service			
Goal 1	Facilitate the strategic marketing of U.S. agricultural products in domestic and international markets.		
Goal 2	Ensure fair and competitive agricultural marketing through marketing tools and regulations.		
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service			
Goal 1	Safeguard U.S. plant and animal resources against introductions of foreign pests and diseases, while meeting international trade obligations.		
Goal 2	Quickly detect and respond to introductions of foreign agricultural pests and diseases or other emerging agricultural health threats, to minimize production losses and export market disruptions.		
Goal 3	Effectively manage plant and animal pests and diseases and wildlife damage which pose risks to agriculture, natural resources, or public health.		
Goal 4	Ensure the humane care and treatment of animals covered under the Animal Welfare Act and the Horse Protection Act.		

*Continued*

GOAL 2 Ensure food for the hungry, and a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply					GOAL 3 Promote sensible management of our natural resources	
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## Linkage of USDA Goals/Subgoals to Agency Goals

## Agency Goals, by Mission Area

Marketing and Regulatory Programs Mission Area <i>(continued)</i>			
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service <i>(continued)</i>			
<b>Goal 5</b>	Facilitate the development of safe and effective veterinary biologics, biotechnology-derived products, and other scientific methods for the benefit of agricultural producers and consumers and to protect the health of American agriculture.		
Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration			
<b>Goal 1</b>	Ensure a fair, open and competitive marketing environment for livestock, meat, and poultry.		
<b>Goal 2</b>	Promote and protect the integrity of the domestic and global marketing of U.S. grain for the benefit of American agriculture.		
Natural Resources and Environment Mission Area			
Forest Service			
<b>Goal 1</b>	Ensure Sustainable Ecosystems		
<b>Goal 2</b>	Provide Multiple Benefits for People within the Capabilities of Ecosystems		
<b>Goal 3</b>	Ensure Organizational Effectiveness		






Continued

GOAL 2 Ensure food for the hungry, and a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply					GOAL 3 Promote sensible management of our natural resources	
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## Linkage of USDA Goals/Subgoals to Agency Goals

## Agency Goals, by Mission Area

Natural Resources and Environment Mission Area <i>(continued)</i>			
Natural Resources Conservation Service			
<b>Goal 1</b>	Individuals and their neighbors working together as effective and willing stewards of the natural resources on their property and in their communities.		
<b>Goal 2</b>	A healthy and productive land that sustains food and fiber production, sustains functioning watersheds and natural systems, enhances the environment, and improves urban and rural landscapes.		
Research, Education and Economics Mission Area			
Agricultural Research Service			
<b>Goal 1</b>	Through research and education, empower the agricultural system with knowledge that will improve competitiveness in domestic production, processing and marketing.		
<b>Goal 2</b>	To ensure an adequate food supply and improved detection, surveillance, prevention, and educational programs for the american public's health, safety and well-being.		
<b>Goal 3</b>	A healthy and well-nourished population who have knowledge, desire, and means to make health promoting choices.		
<b>Goal 4</b>	To enhance the quality of the environment through better understanding of and building on agriculture's and forestry's complex links with soil, water, air, and biotic resources.		
<b>Goal 5</b>	Empower people and communities, through research-based information and education, to address the economic and social challenges of our youth, families, and communities.		

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














GOAL 2 Ensure food for the hungry, and a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply					GOAL 3 Promote sensible management of our natural resources	
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## Linkage of USDA Goals/Subgoals to Agency Goals

## Agency Goals, by Mission Area

Research, Education and Economics Mission Area (continued)			
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service			
Goal 1	An agricultural production system that is highly competitive in the global economy		
Goal 2	A safe, secure food and fiber system		
Goal 3	A healthy, well nourished population		
Goal 4	Greater harmony between agriculture and the environment		
Goal 5	Enhanced economic opportunity and quality of life for Americans		
Economic Research Service			
Goal 1	The agricultural production system is highly competitive in the global economy.		
Goal 2	The food production system is safe and secure.		
Goal 3	The Nation's population is healthy and well-nourished.		
Goal 4	Agriculture and the environment are in harmony.		
Goal 5	Enhanced economic opportunity and quality of life for rural Americans.		

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GOAL 2 Ensure food for the hungry, and a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply					GOAL 3 Promote sensible management of our natural resources	
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## Linkage of USDA Goals/Subgoals to Agency Goals

## Agency Goals, by Mission Area







Research, Education and Economics Mission Area (continued)			
National Agricultural Statistics Service			
Goal 1	Through research and education, empower the agricultural system with knowledge that will improve domestic production, processing and marketing to successfully compete in the global market.		
Goal 2	Ensure an adequate food and fiber supply and promote food safety through improved detection, surveillance, prevention, and education.		
Goal 3	Foster a healthy and well-nourished population having the knowledge, desire, and means to make health-promoting choices.		
Goal 4	Enhance the quality of the environment through a better understanding of and building on agriculture's and forestry's complex links with soil, water, air, and biotic resources.		
Goal 5	Empower people and communities, through research-based information and education, to address the economic and social problems facing our youth, families, and communities.		

Continued

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## Linkage of USDA Goals/Subgoals to Agency Goals

## Agency Goals, by Mission Area

Rural Development Mission Area			
Goal 1	Good jobs and diverse markets. Rural Development will improve the quality of life in rural America by encouraging the establishment and growth of rural businesses and cooperatives.		
Goal 2	Quality housing and modern community facilities. Rural Development will improve the quality of life of rural residents by providing access to technical assistance, capital and credit for quality housing and modern, essential community facilities.		
Goal 3	Modern affordable utilities. Rural Development will improve the quality of life of rural residents by promoting and providing access to capital and credit for the development and delivery of modern, affordable utility services.		
Alternative Agricultural Research and Commercialization Corporation			
Goal 1	To accelerate the commercialization of industrial and consumer products made from renewable agricultural, forestry, and animal by-product raw materials.		

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